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BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

I.

DOGMATIC THEOLOGY.

DR. WILLIAM SHEDD'S treatise, or rather text-book, issued by the Scribners,* gives a clear and logical presentation of doctrinal theology of the general type of what is usually understood as Calvinistic, or, as the author terms it, Augustino-Calvinistic. Dr. Shedd is an eminent teacher of these doctrines, and is undoubtedly a high authority on all patristic questions, and in his treatment of the different topics which group themselves around this general heading, he does not hesitate to avow his decided preference for the reasonings of the ancient fathers of the Church, expounded by the systems of Calvin and other writers of the Reformation period, over the advanced and progressive theology of the present age, on the ground, as he puts it, that the works of such men as Athanasius, Augustine, Anselm, and Calvin are based on scriptural revelation and were designed by Providence to stand as bulwarks of the faith for all time. As an exposition of the views usually held by the Calvinistic school, this work is entitled to the highest respect. Dr. Shedd uses the liberty of an expositor to give his own interpretation and philosophic explanation of certain points, as, for example, the doctrine of original sin; but in the main the work is strictly within the lines of the orthodox evangelical school. There is abundant evidence of research and sound scholarship, and the treatment of the various topics is elaborate, comprehensive, and profound, without prolixity or pedantry. The two volumes comprise seven main treatises, of which the first is introductory and deals with the divisions and definitions of what the author calls "theological science." The other divisions are Bibliology, Theology in its strict sense, as referring to the nature and attributes of the Divine Being, Anthropology or the science of man in his relation to God, Christology or the person of Christ, Soteriology or the atonement and its application to individuals, and Eschatology or the doctrine of the Intermediate State and of Final Things. It is impossible to attempt a review of these collected treatises in the space at our disposal. The subjects are chiefly of interest to scholarly theologians. Dr. Shedd does not conceal his contempt for the criticisms of men who, themselves not theologians, venture to attack the patristic theology. He says: "As the scientific comprehension of law is expected from jurists and not from laymen, so that of theology must be sought among philosophers and divines." There is, however, as we venture to suggest, this difference. The principles of human jurisprudence are based on the innate perceptions of truth and morality prevalent in human society, and where a law violates these principles its doom is certain.

* "Dogmatic Theology." By William G. T. Shedd, D. D., Roosevelt Professor of Systematic Theology in Union Theological Seminary. 2 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

The fundamental principles of theology, as theology is here presented to us, are above and beyond human comprehension and can only be measurably *apprehended*; hence doctors and experts in theology assume or appear to speak with something of a supernatural authority. This has always been the claim of ecclesiastics, more or less distinctly avowed, and men have over and over again risen up in rebellion against it, claiming that the human intellect and conscience may and must eventually sit in judgment upon every system of religious faith, and that those systems or parts of systems which do violence to the reason and judgment of mankind must sooner or later go to the wall. Dr. Shedd, in this treatise, labors hard, and with varying success, to expound the abstruse points of the Calvinistic creeds, and to this extent, we presume, recognizes the right of men to accept or reject his propositions, within the limits of conscience and under the guidance of the spirit of truth. As an exhibit of the distinctive doctrines of the evangelical school, the work is of pre-eminent value.

II.

MEMOIRS OF GENERAL SHERIDAN.

AMONG all the military memoirs called forth by the late Civil War, none surpasses in sustained interest, or in simple, graphic style of narration, that of General Sheridan.* At first the reader probably fears that the autobiographical form of the story may prove to be inconvenient. It is so difficult for any one to sit down and write an account of his own exploits without doing injustice either to himself or the history! In this case, the story grows in attractiveness with every page. For severe simplicity and dignity, and the absence of grandiloquence and perfervid enthusiasm, the book reminds one of the pages of Xenophon. Possibly Sheridan himself might have posed as a greater man, and possibly a greater tribute might have been paid to his memory as a successful soldier, if his history had been written by another person; but the world would have lost a book of classic merit, as this book undoubtedly is, and it will be so regarded by future generations. The closing chapters give an account of his experiences and impressions in the German camp as a spectator of the Franco-German contest of 1870.

III.

THE JEWISH RELIGION.

A BRIEF résumé of the history and evolution of the Jewish religion is undertaken by Rabbi Solomon Schindler, of the Temple Adath Israel, Boston, in "Dissolving Views of the History of Judaism."[†] The three objective points may be stated as follows: Religion has ever been changing; the forms have changed only where their underlying principles have outlived their usefulness; and the present generation has the same right to change its religious practices as had its predecessors. The work is composed of a series of week-day lectures, which were delivered by the rabbi to his congregation in the form of brief biographical studies of prominent Jewish leaders from the earliest times to the present day. These are concise in style and philosophical in tone.

The religion of the early Hebrews is considered from a lower plane than usual, only two biblical characters being introduced, and these are treated with rather

* "Personal Memoirs of P. H. Sheridan," General United States Army. 2 vols. Charles L. Webster & Co.

[†] "Dissolving Views in the History of Judaism." By Rabbi Solomon Schindler. Boston: Lee & Shepard.